



Exchange Report

Fall 2017

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Part I - Monthly Activity log

August

My flight to Oslo was during mid August, as BI starts their semester rather early. Immediately after settling into my dorm, a two week orientation followed (14th - 25th August), where the student bodies 'Fadderullan' had organised a variety of activities for exchange students. The semester soon started officially in late August (21st August).

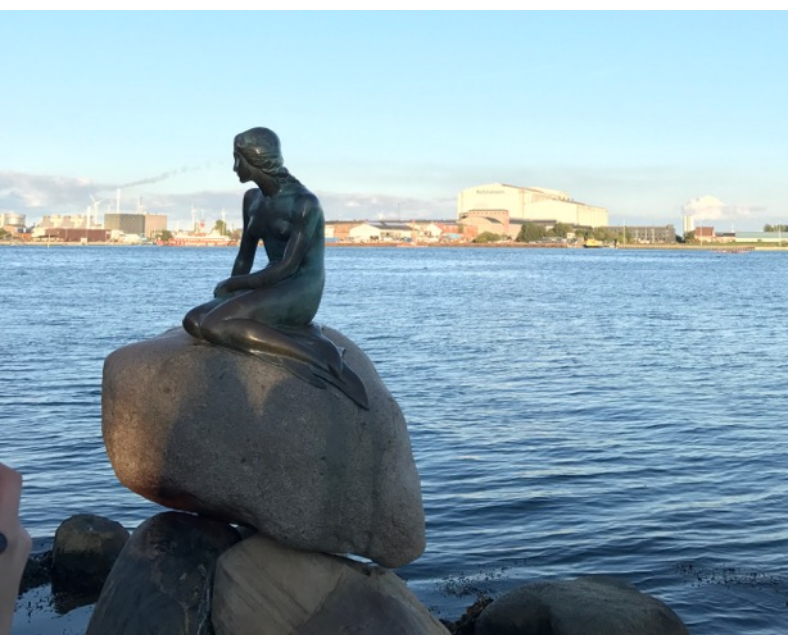
I spent August settling into the new life in Oslo (e.g. locating grocery stores nearby, figuring out the transportation system etc.) and also exploring around the city and nearby islands.





September

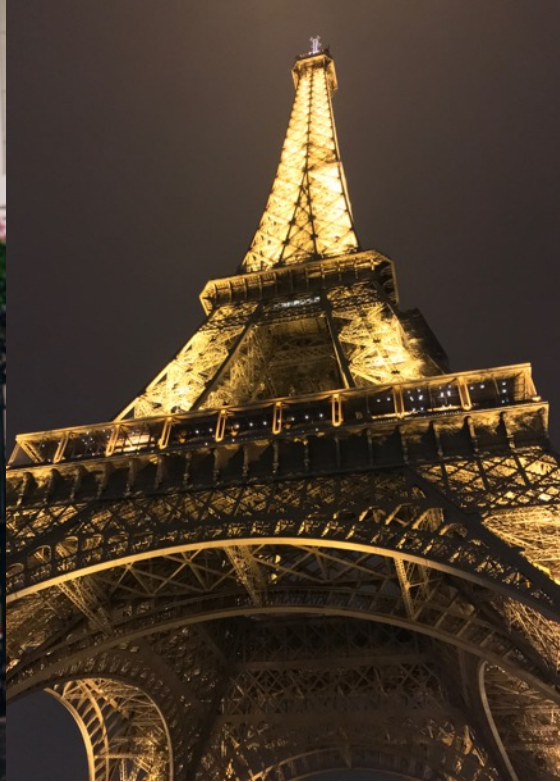
Classes continued, though the timetable is much more flexible than we would be used to, that gave us a lot of free time. Travelling started this month for me, kicking things off with a trip to Trolltunga early September with one of the friends from HKUST (I would recommend doing thorough research and preparation if you are interested in this hike, it is certainly demanding). Then, around mid September, I took a friend chilling around the local areas for a few days before heading to Copenhagen for a short trip.



October

Since all my courses did not have midterms, I had quite some free time on hand during the middle of the term (October and November). Early this month, I travelled alone to UK (London and Cambridge) for a little more than a week to visit friends as well as do some sightseeing. Another friend from HKUST visited Oslo after I returned, so obviously, I became his tour guide and brought him around the city. Two weeks after returning to Oslo, I flew to London again (surprise!), since plane tickets from London to Iceland was more affordable. Before flying off to Iceland, we toured London again, explored Brighton and enjoyed some great food and company. We soon flew to Iceland at the end of the month. It was entirely a novel experience for me, to be surrounded by all the beautiful nature. Blue Lagoon, the golden circle, south coast... we did all the most popular tourist stuff, and of course, watched the Northern lights (though it was a pity we couldn't see it for ourselves).





November

I spent roughly a week's time to catch up with some classes and group work after coming back from Iceland, before flying to Brussels and Paris in the middle of the month for 6 days. I returned to Oslo a week before my first exam (29th November), so that I could have ample time to study for it.





December and January :)

I was off again in early December, this time to Amsterdam. I visited a friend in Nijmegen, and went to quite a few tourist spots in Amsterdam. I came back to the exam period, where I had a presentation and two other papers to be submitted. After wrapping up all my academic assessments, I left Oslo on 14th Dec, officially bidding farewell.

From then on, I travelled to a handful of countries and cities, Spain, Italy, Austria to name a few, before coming back to Hong Kong on 16th Jan 2018.



Part II - General Exchange Information

General

Visa Procedures

Upon completion of administrative procedures, BI will send you your admission letter (most of the documents from BI are digital files). You then have to print it out, and bring it along with other supporting documents, to the Norwegian consulate in Sheung Wan for applying visa. The application fee was around HKD2900 but subjected to variation. Call the consulate in advance to book your appointment. It would be best if you start the application process as soon as you get the admission letter, since it generally takes a month for the visa to be approved.

Tips :

Remember to comply with the photo regulations

Remember to make copies of ALL your passport pages that has been stamped, regardless of the country!

Remember to copy BOTH sides of your HKID card as well as passport!

Accommodations

There are 3 accommodation providers (BSN, Sio and Diakonhjemmet) from which you may choose from. For me, I chose Sio at Bjølsen. I later also discovered that quite a lot of exchange students like to choose Bjølsen as well.

My room type includes basic furniture, private bathroom, and shares kitchen and communal area with 5 other roommates. The room was pretty spacious for one person to live in comfortably. Most importantly, the location is IMPECCABLE! 5 minutes of bus ride to BI campus, and 20 minutes to city centre taking the same bus. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND Bjølsen, though it is definitely not the cheapest option (I paid HKD4606 each month).

Finance & Banking

I'd warn you right now, Norway IS expensive. Of course, there can still be ways to save money here and there. The following would only be an approximate estimate of how much I spent for my entire exchange.

Category	HKD
Round trip flight ticket	8,000
Insurance	2,000
Daily Expenditure in Norway (4 months)	40,000
Travelling expenses	50,000
Total	100,000

As for banking matters, I opened an account with Citibank before I left for exchange, since their card does not charge withdrawal fee at ATMs like most cards do. It is quite convenient as most daily transactions can be done easily with it.

If you were to bring your own debit cards, make sure it has the 'PLUS' sign on it, 'Unionpay' is generally not accepted in Europe. Also bring along perhaps 2-3 credit cards with you, visa AND master card, Amex is also widely accepted and super convenient to use in Europe.

One thing to note, credit or debit cards in Norway generally require a 4-digit PIN, so make sure you contact your bank to change your card settings in advance (or you might try inputting '0000' when asked for PIN if you don't have one, though sometimes it might not work).

Transportation

For travelling to Oslo, I highly recommend looking up youth tickets/ student fares for different airlines. It is much more of a bargain than purchasing ordinary fares.

For travelling around Europe, you should look at budget airlines such as Ryanair, Vueling, and especially Norwegian Air. These budget airlines provide a more affordable yet not too bad of a travelling experience.

On a daily basis in Oslo, I take bus as there is a stop exactly outside my building. Occasionally I would also take the metro as there is an exit right outside the campus. I purchased the Ruter card for 30days, which costs 425NOK / 30 days for

students. U can take any kind of transportation (bus,metro,ferry,tram...) with your card, except Flytoget (the airport express). Remember to top up your card every 30 days AND activate for the first time after topping up. As passengers do not have to tap their cards on machines to enter the stations or vehicles, there will be spot check. If you were discovered to have an invalid card or no ticket, the fine is heavy (1000NOK).

Food

As dining out is not that cheap, most of the time you might cook yourself. There are a few large supermarkets around Oslo, the ones closest to where I lived was Meny and Kiwi. Kiwi is a little cheaper, but less choices to choose from than Meny. Rema 1000 is also another more affordable grocery store you may visit. There is also a grocery store in Grønland that sells cheaper fresh ingredients and fruits. I STRONGLY recommend checking it out.

P.S. Take advantage of the cheap and tasty salmon while you are in Norway :)

Climate

When we got to Oslo, it was still summer, but the temperature difference between day and night is stark. Towards mid October, the temperature drops and the first snow comes usually in mid November. It would then be around 0-1 degree celsius, or sometimes minus degrees.

Though the temperature seems daunting, it does not feel that cold as the humidity is extremely low.

Health & Safety

As per other expenses, it would not be cheap to go to a doctor in Oslo. Therefore, I would suggest you to bring medication that you are familiar with from home. If not, Sio and BI actually provide a wide range of health services as well. For details, you may visit <https://www.bi.edu/study-at-bi/student-life/health-and-wellness/>.

Communication

English will definitely suffice. Norwegians all speak really fluent English. :)

Campus related

Course Registration

The registration process is pretty self explanatory, you just have to hand in your application and wait for the result. Personally, I had 4 courses (as required by BI, 30 ECTS per semester where most of the courses are 7.5 ECTS each), which all of them only has one class (around 3 hours) per week.

EXC 3505 Strategy

This course requires students to form groups and work on a strategy paper for local entrepreneurs, providing suggestions on how the business can succeed based on different analytical methods taught in class. The professor will provide periodic guidance and suggestions throughout the working process to make sure everyone is on the right track.

The final grade is 50% on the presentation of the paper and 50% on the actual paper itself.

ELE 3702 Social Entrepreneurship

This course is kind of similar to SBMT classes or MGMT 2130 at HKUST. It also requires students to form their own groups and work on cases of social entrepreneurs. During my term, we could choose our own cases from all over the world, and write up a paper indicating issues within the social entrepreneur and come up with recommended solutions. There will be progress presentation throughout the semester, so that the professor and the class can all provide their opinions for each group.

There will also be a concluding written exam for 3 hours that students have to work on, which is a take home exam (yes, you can discuss with your friends on your answers, which was what I did! haha). A two-page self reflection is also required at the end of the term.

The grade is divided into 60% group paper, 30% written exam and 10% reflection notes.

EXC 2901 Norwegian Culture and History - An Introduction

As the course title suggested, this is a course about Norwegian history, and ONLY open to exchange students. In my opinion, it is pretty interesting to learn about the country you are exchanging in.

The course covers content from the period from the Viking period to modern Norway, with two field trips (The folk museum and art gallery) during the

semester. Students would have to give a short presentation after either one of the field trips.

The grade concludes with a 100% written exam at the end of the semester. If you were to take this course, make sure you DO NOT MISS the last lecture, as the instructor would provide tips and guidelines as to how to answer the exam.

ELE 3718 Media Management and Economics

This is a random course I picked out of curiosity, as there is no longer courses that fit into my credit transfer plan. It is a pretty chill class, where the professor often invites her colleagues or other professors to give lectures on their field of profession. Its content would be kind of a mixture between economics and ISOM big data courses.

The course only requires students to write a 100% final paper on a self selected topic, and students may do the work in groups of 1 to 3 people (same page requirement).

Teaching & Assessment Methods

As with most foreign countries, teachers at BI always encourages students to speak up in class and actively engage in activities. There is also quite a lot of time allocated for students to work with one another, to share and inspire as
As for assessments, it is an entirely new experience for me. Reports and papers are submitted through Digiex (you will be taught how to navigate when the exam period approaches, no worries). Written exams are done on school laptops (so much for written lol). What's more, there are take home exams as mentioned above, where you can literally discuss with your friends while working on the exam.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

Different clubs and societies such as SBIO and InSA often organise a variety of events for students, which details would be posted onto 'BI Exchange' Facebook group. You may be able to join activities such as winter balls, hikes, or even overnight trips to other countries (for real cheap too)!

There is also a bar on campus, Kroa, where more affordable alcoholic beverages are sold and they hold regular events that welcomes everyone.

Orientation Activities

As mentioned above, the first two weeks would be packed with orientation activities. From concerts to picnics in the park to parties, you may pick what activities you would like to join. It would be a great chance to get to know new buddies, so do try to go to most of them!

International Services & Activities

InSA is the largest international student association in BI. Apart from the vast array of activities the association offers, you may also reach out to them for help should you come across any issues during your stay. You may also choose to approach the International Office of BI, where there will be staff to help you out.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

Athletica Nydalen gym is located on campus, where a wide facilities and classes are offered. Though paid membership is required. If you would like to chillax a bit, Kroa the bar on campus can be a great spot.

Part III - Items to bring

Passport
documents (visa, copy of insurance policy etc.)
debit/credit cards
warm layers
wind-proof layer
shoes with good grip (for walking on snow/ice)
skincare (hydration is really really important!)
laptop + chargers
international adapters
medicine
camera

Part IV - Useful links

BI website for international students

<https://www.bi.edu/study-at-bi/student-life/>

BI student portal

<https://at.bi.no/EN/>

Sio

<https://sio.no>

Ruter

<https://ruter.no>

Ryanair

<https://www.ryanair.com/gb/en/>

Norwegian Air

<https://www.norwegian.com>

Citymapper

<https://citymapper.com/hong-kong>